Region 5 ORA Correspondence Manual

To be used for Region 5 correspondence signed by the RA/DRA

Index:

Correspondence Fundamentals…………………………………... 2

Letter Fundamentals……………………………………………... 4

Intergovernmental Correspondence Guidelines…………………….. 5

Memoranda…………………………………………………….. 7

Attachments vs. Enclosures……………………………………… 9

Date Stamping…………………………………………………….. 10

Please use this manual for Region 5 correspondence, including letters and memoranda. Most of the information in this manual comes from the EPA Correspondence Manual. You should refer to the EPA Correspondence Manual for any issues not addressed here. Please follow this manual if there is conflicting guidance between the two manuals. These are general guidelines and are provided with the understanding that certain documents (such as legal documents) will follow a different style. The EPA Correspondence Manual is available on the intranet here http://www.r5intra.epa.gov/Off/ORA under "Tools." ***Please contact Ronna Beckmann (6-0689) or Denise Gawlinski (6-9859) in the Regional Administrator's Office with any questions.***

CORRESPONDENCE FUNDAMENTALS

STATIONERY/LETTERHEAD Use pre-printed EPA letterhead, not computer-generated letterhead. Succeeding pages (any additional pages after the first page) must be printed on plain, non-letterhead paper. Both letters and memoranda must be on letterhead.

STANDARD WORD PROCESSING FORMAT
Please follow the following style guidelines:
- 12 point Times New Roman typeface.
- One-inch margins – Margins on the first page may be reduced slightly where necessary to improve the appearance of a document, such as to keep a letter all on one page. The bottom margin can be dropped to as low as 0.3 inches to fit a document on one page. On succeeding pages, use a standard one-inch margin on all four sides.
- Indenting paragraphs in letters – Do not indent paragraphs in letters or memoranda.
- All correspondence should be aligned to the left. Do not center, justify, or right align the text, including the signature line.
- Page numbers – Do not number the first page of your correspondence. Include a page number for succeeding pages of correspondence totaling three or more pages. Center the page number at the bottom of all succeeding pages. Do not enclose the page number in quotes, dashes, or parentheses.
- Single-space the body of the document, but double-space between paragraphs (one blank line between each paragraph).

MAIL CODE Mail codes should be included on envelopes, but not included on the first page of the document. Legal documents, which should include the mail code on the first page of the document, are the only exception to this rule.

STYLE PREFERENCES

BE CONSISTENT Review your documents for consistency. The following are frequent inconsistencies in Region 5 documents:
- Numbers (two vs. 2 – pick a numbers convention and stick with it)
- Serial commas (blue, green, and red vs. blue, green and red)
- Federal/federal and State/state (see below)
- Left aligning paragraphs vs. justified (always left aligned)
- FY10 vs. FY’10 vs. FY2010 vs. fiscal year 2010

Region 5 Regions are identified with Arabic numbers, not Roman numerals (Region 5, not Region V). Also, because of the Administrator’s “One EPA” initiative, do not use Region 5 unless it’s necessary. In other words, if we’re hosting a meeting in Region 5, you’d need to use Region 5. If it’s EPA more generally, use EPA.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency vs. EPA At the first appearance in the body of a document, write out “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency” or “the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.” Thereafter, use “EPA.” Do not include a parenthetical defining EPA. This is the only exception to the convention of defining acronyms (below). In rare instances, it may be less awkward to write "the EPA," such as in a list of other organizations that begin with "the" (i.e., "The following agencies have jurisdiction: The EPA, the IRS, the State of Michigan . . ."). In circumstances like this, include "the" before "EPA."

Acronyms Other than for EPA, define all acronyms in parentheses, using the acronym for each use after the first.

First appearance in the document	*Thereafter*
On-Scene Coordinator (OSC)	OSC
Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA)	GLLA

If a term appears only once in a document, do not include an acronym. In other words, don't define a term with an acronym if you are not going to use it again in the document.

Email It's email, and only capitalized at the beginning of a sentence or in a title.

Percentages Write out "percent" in the text of correspondence and use the symbol "%" in graphs or tables.

CAPITALIZATION

Federal or federal?

The word "federal" is not always capitalized. Only when it is part of a proper noun (official name of a specific person, place, or thing), should federal be capitalized:

- **F**ederal Bureau of Investigation

When writing about the Federal Government in its official capacity (using the term as an official title), capitalize both Federal and Government:

- The **F**ederal **G**overnment of the United States of America…
- The **F**ederal **G**overnment must take steps to…

Most of the time, federal is used as a general classification, and should not be capitalized:

- At this time of year, **f**ederal employees are asked to contribute to a charity.
- The law is subject to **f**ederal, state, and local review.

State or state?

Capitalize "state" only when part of a formal name, such as "the State of Michigan." Thereafter, in the same document, when referring to the "State of Michigan," you may use "the **S**tate." When speaking about a state or states generally, use lowercase:

- The Clean Air Act requires **s**tates to submit . . .

LETTER FUNDAMENTALS

Letters should be clear, concise, and to the point. Where possible, **keep letters to no more than one page**. If a letter extends onto a third page, consider a short letter with a longer enclosure.

Follow the standard format below when preparing the address block in a standard business letter.

Standard Format:	*Example:*
1. Addressee's name	Mr. Brian Hendrix
2. Title (if applicable)	Director, Office of the Executive Secretariat
3. Company, Organization, or Agency	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
4. Street or Delivery Address	1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, MC 1101A
5. City, State, Zip Code	Washington, D.C. 20460
6. Country (only if international)	* place country in capital letters

In the inside address, state names are spelled out, not abbreviated by postal code. Washington, D.C. is the only acceptable abbreviation, but must include periods after each letter and no space between the letters.

Do not abbreviate Street, Avenue, Boulevard, Place, Way, Road, or any other address notation.

Always place two spaces between the state and ZIP code. For all other elements of the address block, use one space to separate them.

The salutation begins with "Dear" and ends with a colon, never a comma. The salutation should be placed on the second line below the last line of the inside address and flush with the left margin. Salutations should include a courtesy title before the individual's name. If the individual does not have a special title (Professor, Doctor, Mayor, Senator, Chief) provide a courtesy title – Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss.

Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation.

Signature Block

The elements of the signature block should be flush with the left margin. Leave three blank lines between the closing and the typed name (hit the enter key four times after typing "Sincerely," to allow enough room for the signature). Example:

Sincerely,

Susan Hedman
Regional Administrator

The signature block should never appear by itself on a page. Include at least two lines from the preceding paragraph.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE GUIDELINES

Use the following formats for letters to **U.S. Senators**, noting the difference depending on whether the letter is being sent to the state or Washington, D.C. office.

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator (surname):

or

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senator
(district office street address)
(city, state ZIP code)

Dear Senator (surname):

Use the following formats for letters to **U.S. Representatives**, noting the difference depending on whether the letter is being sent to the district or Washington, D.C. office. Also note that in the second example, there are two spaces before the word “Representative.”

The Honorable (full name)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman (surname):

or

The Honorable (full name)
Member, U.S. House of
  Representatives
(local street)
(local city, state ZIP code)

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman (surname):

Use the following format for letters to **Governors**.

The Honorable (full name)
Governor of (state)
(street address)
(city, state ZIP code)

Dear Governor (surname):

Use the following formats for letters to **state legislators**. Please note that for these letters, the salutation line should *not* read “Dear State Senator (surname)” or Dear State Representative (surname).” Instead, for state legislators, use “Dear Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. (surname):”

The Honorable (full name)
(state) Senate
(street address)
(city, state ZIP code)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. (surname):

The Honorable (full name)
(state) House of Representatives
(or Assembly or House of
Delegates)
(street address)
(city, state ZIP code)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. (surname):

Requirements for the Introduction and Ending of Intergovernmental Letters

Introduction

All intergovernmental letters should begin with the following: "Thank you for your (xx date) letter concerning . . ." followed by a brief reference to the topic. Note that there is no comma after the date.

The summary of the incoming letter in the first paragraph should be **short**, briefly stating the issue. Do not include lengthy descriptions of the concerns in the incoming letter. Also, do not assume facts in the summary. For example, do not write, "Thank you for your letter of March 5, 2011 concerning contamination in the Western River," if what's in dispute is whether the river is contaminated.

Closing

All congressional letters should end with the following closing:

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Ronna Beckmann or Denise Gawlinski, the Region 5 Congressional Liaisons, at (312) 886-3000.

All letters to other elected officials (not members of the U.S. Congress) should end with the following closing:

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Ronna Beckmann or Denise Gawlinski, the Region 5 Intergovernmental Liaisons, at (312) 886-3000.

If the letter is not to an elected official, please list the appropriate contact(s) in the division.

MEMORANDA

The word **MEMORANDUM** should be typed in capital letters, **bolded**, and underlined. **MEMORANDUM** should be placed two lines below the office heading of the letterhead, flush with the left margin.

Memorandum Elements: SUBJECT:

Type "SUBJECT:" in bolded, capital letters two lines below the word MEMORANDUM and flush with the left margin. SUBJECT should always be followed by a colon (:). Type the subject following a one-tab indentation to the right of the "SUBJECT:" heading. Capitalize the first letter of each word of the subject line, except for articles (e.g. the, a, an), prepositions (e.g. to, at, on, during, until, with), and conjunctions (e.g. and, for, because, than, that).

SUBJECT: Announcement of Microsoft Office as the EPA Standard Productivity Suite

The subject line is a brief summary of the main topic of the memorandum. Limit the subject to one line whenever possible. If your subject does not fit onto one line, begin the second line aligned with the first character of the subject itself.

SUBJECT: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board
Selections for 2006

Spell out acronyms or abbreviations in the subject line.

Memorandum Elements: FROM:

Type **FROM:** in bolded, capital letters two lines below the subject and flush with the left margin. Type the name and title of the person who will sign the memorandum to the right of "**FROM:**". The signer's office should be written directly under his or her name.

The first letter of the signer's name should be even with the first letter of the subject line.

SUBJECT: Announcement of Microsoft Office as the EPA Standard Productivity Suite

FROM: Mark Day, Director
Office of Technology Operations and Planning

Unless the signer is the Administrator, he/she will sign his/her name or initial next to the typed name in the **FROM:** line.

Memorandum Elements: THRU:

A **THRU:** line is used only when one or more individuals are needed to endorse, concur, or coordinate information contained in a memorandum prior to its release. Add a blank line between multiple **THRU:** addressees.

Type **THRU:** in bolded, capital letters two lines below the **FROM:** line and flush with the left margin.

If a **THRU:** line is used, indicate the individual's full name, title, and office. The first letter in a **THRU:** line should be even with the first letter in the **SUBJECT:** and **FROM:** lines.

FROM: Bob Hendrix, Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat

THRU: Twanna Smith, Director of Hiring
Human Resources

Angela Brookes, Deputy Director of Hiring
Human Resources

TO: OARM Staff Members

Staff members identified on the **THRU:** line should initial to the right of their name before forwarding the memorandum to the next **THRU:** recipient or the person(s) listed on the **TO:** line.

Memorandum Elements: TO

Type **TO:** two lines below the **THRU:** line. If there is no **THRU:** line in the memorandum, place **TO:** two lines below the **FROM:** line and flush with the left margin. The first letter in the **TO:** line should be even with the first letter in the **SUBJECT:**, **FROM:**, and, if used, **THRU:** lines.

If a memorandum will be distributed to specific individuals/officials, type their full name, title, and office.

Generally, memoranda prepared for mass release (e.g. all Agency employees) or to specific program offices, regions, or labs do not specify individual names.

TO: All Employees

TO: Assistant Regional Administrators

TO: Senior Information Managers

Memorandum Elements: The Body

Begin the body of the memorandum two lines below the last addressee listed in the **TO:** line.

ATTACHMENTS VS. ENCLOSURES

Attachments are included with memoranda and enclosures are included with letters.

Attachments

Attachments are separate documents included as supporting or supplementary material to a memorandum. Attachments may be letters, directives, tables, organizational charts, handbooks, pamphlets, or a variety of other types of reference materials.

If an attachment is identified in the text, type "Attachment" three lines below the memorandum body, flush with the left-hand margin. For more than one identified attachment, use the plural form "Attachments" and indicate the number of attachments.

Attachment
Attachments (3)

If an attachment is not identified in the text, type "Attachment(s):" three lines below the last line of the memorandum body, flush with the left margin. Number and list each attachment on a separate line. If more than one line is needed for any listed attachment, continue the information on a succeeding line aligned with the first character of the name/identifier of the attachment.

Attachments:
1. Microsoft Office 2003 Technical Guidelines
2. Microsoft Office Deployment Questions Answered – Office Deployment Dates, Office Suite Protocol

Do not substitute "enclosure(s)" for "attachment(s)."

Enclosures

Enclosures are separate sheets of information included with correspondence, such as tables, forms, statements, pamphlets, and reference letters.

When an enclosure is identified in the correspondence, type the word "Enclosure" three lines below the last line of the signature block, flush with the left margin.

For more than one enclosure, use the plural form "Enclosures."

If an enclosure is not identified in the body of the letter, after typing the word "Enclosure," list the enclosure's identifying information. And, similarly with "Enclosures":

Enclosures
1. Letter dated June 7, 2001
2. Copy of the Clean Air Act

Do not substitute the term "attachment(s)" for "enclosure(s)."

DATE STAMPING

On both letters and memoranda, please make sure that the date is easy-to-read and centered.

Dating Letters

Include a date on the letter when you know the date that the letter will be signed. Otherwise, the date should be rubber-stamped.

If a typed date is not included, once a letter has been approved for signature and signed, the signing office or official will rubber stamp the date, centered at the top of the first page, approximately ¼ inch below the letterhead.

The date should reflect month-day-year order:

January 1, 2006

Dating Memoranda

Center the date at the top of the page just below the letterhead above **MEMORANDUM**.

When you know the date of signing, you may type the date in.

Omit the date on memoranda that will be signed in another office or on memoranda that may not be signed on the day they are written. The office in which the memorandum is signed is responsible for adding the date to the original and all copies of the memorandum.

The date should reflect month-day-year order:

January 1, 2006